

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1.       A method of extracting related information from electronic files, each  
2 file containing a plurality of records for containing data, the method comprising:

3           a)       comparing data contained in a key segment of each record of a first file  
4 to data in a related key segment of each record of a second file;

5           b)       upon each occurrence of a match of data in the key segment of a record  
6 in the first file to data in the related key segment of a record in the second file, creating a  
7 record in a temporary electronic file, wherein the record in the temporary file includes data  
8 from the records of both the first and second files having matching key segment data;

9           c)       selecting data from records of the temporary file; and

10          d)       outputting the selected data.

1           2.       The method recited in claim 1, further comprising thereafter deleting  
2 the temporary file.

1           3.       The method recited in claim 1, further comprising:  
2 for additional files, repeating steps a), b) and c) using an additional file as the  
3 first file and the temporary file as the second file.

1           4.       The method recited in claim 1, wherein the first file is stored in  
2 electronic form on magnetic tape.

1           5.       The method recited in claim 1, wherein the first file is stored in  
2 electronic form on media selected from a group consisting of solid state memory, magnetic  
3 disk memory, and optical memory.

1           6.       The method recited in claim 1, further comprising sorting the records  
2 of the first file based on data contained in the key segment.

1           7.       The method of claim 1, wherein a record of the temporary file created  
2 upon a match of data between records in the first and second files contains less than all of the  
3 data from the matching records of the first and second files.

1           8.       The method of claim 1, further comprising selecting data from the  
2 records of the temporary file based in part on logic operators.

1           9.     The method of claim 8, wherein the logic operators are selected from a  
2 group consisting of less than, greater than, equal to, not-equal-to, less-than-or-equal-to,  
3 greater-than-or-equal-to, in and not in.

1           10.    A system for extracting related information from electronic files,  
2 comprising:  
3           a processor;  
4           a storage device;  
5           an output device;  
6           a first electronic file stored on the storage device, the first electronic file  
7 containing a plurality of records for containing data; and  
8           a second electronic file stored on the storage device, the second electronic file  
9 containing a plurality of records for containing data;  
10          wherein the processor is configured to compare data contained in a key  
11 segment of each record of the first file to data in a related key segment of each record of the  
12 second file;  
13          wherein the processor is further configured such that upon each occurrence of  
14 a match of data in the key segment of a record in the first file to data in the related key  
15 segment of a record in the second file, the processor causes a record in a temporary electronic  
16 file to be created, wherein the record in the temporary file includes data from the records of  
17 both the first and second file having matching a key segment data; and  
18          wherein the processor is further configured to select data from records of the  
19 temporary file and output the data to the output device.

1           11.    The system of claim 10 wherein the processor is further configured to  
2 thereafter delete the temporary file.

1           12.    The system of claim 10, wherein the first file is stored on the storage  
2 device on magnetic tape.

1           13.    The system of claim 10, wherein the first file is stored on the storage  
2 device on media selected from a group consisting of solid state memory, magnetic disk  
3 memory, and optical memory.

1           14.     The system of claim 10, wherein the processor is further configured to  
2     sort the records of the first file based on data contained in the key segment.

1           15.     The system of claim 10, wherein a record of the temporary file created  
2     upon a match of data between records in the first and second files contains less than all of the  
3     data from the records of the first and second files.

1           16.     The system of claim 10, wherein the processor is further configured to  
2     select data from records of the temporary file based in part on logic operators.

1           17.     The system of claim 16, wherein the logic operators are selected from  
2     a group consisting of less than, greater than, equal to, not-equal-to, less-than-or-equal-to,  
3     greater-than-or-equal-to, in and not in.

1           18.     A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions  
2     for performing a method comprising:

3                 a)     receiving instructions identifying two or more electronic files from  
4     which to extract related information, each file containing a plurality of records for containing  
5     data;

6                 b)     receiving instructions identifying a key segment of each record of a  
7     first file and a related key segment of each record of a second file;

8                 c)     comparing data contained in the key segment of each record of the first  
9     file to data contained in the related key segment of each record of the second file;

10                d)     upon each occurrence of a match of data in the key segment of a record  
11     in the first file to data in the related key segment of a record in the second file, creating a  
12     record in a temporary electronic file, wherein the record in the temporary file includes data  
13     from the records of both the first and second file having matching key segment data;

14                e)     receiving instructions identifying data to be selected from the  
15     temporary file;

16                f)     selecting the data from records of the temporary file; and

17                g)     outputting the data.

1           19.     The medium of claim 18, wherein the method further includes  
2     thereafter deleting the temporary file.

1           20.    The medium of claim 18, wherein the method further includes:  
2           for additional files, repeating steps a), b), c) and d) using an additional file as  
3   the first file and the temporary file as the second file.

1           21.    The medium of claim 18, wherein the method further includes sorting  
2   the records of the first file based on data contained in the key segment.

1           22.    The medium of claim 18, wherein the method further includes  
2   selecting data from records of the temporary file based in part on logic operators.

1           23.    The medium of claim 22, wherein the logic operators are selected from  
2   a group consisting of less than, greater than, equal to, not-equal-to, less-than-or-equal-to,  
3   greater-than-or-equal-to, in and not in.

1           24.    A temporary electronic file, comprising:  
2           at least one record having a plurality of data fields, wherein the data fields are  
3   related to data fields of records in a first and a second electronic file, and wherein the data in  
4   each record of the temporary file are identical to data in the related data fields of either the  
5   first or the second file.